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City of Gastonia

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Gastonia Municipal Airport

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October 2, 1997

Office of the Secretary
FCC
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: MM Docket No. 97-182
Preemption of State & Local Land Use Restrictions

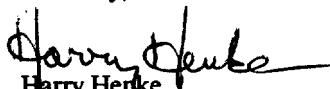
Gentlemen:

We are a small general aviation airport that serves the needs of corporate and private aviation in our community and the entire county. We are one of the most active small airports in N.C. As our population and ground transportation usage continues to grow in the years ahead, our airport will become even more necessary to this community.

But the unregulated intrusion of tall towers in our area by this proposed rule, could kill this airport and make it so dangerous that pilots would no longer want to use it. Just the radio interference alone could jeopardize radio and navigation communications which are vital to safe aviation today. The result would be a major blow to the corporate development prospects of this and other communities across the country, most of which depend upon aviation for transportation.

We ask that you reject this rulemaking.

Sincerely,


Harry Herke
Airport Administrator

cc Larry Wood, Ex.Dir.
NASAO
Sue Myrick, US House Representative
David Hoyle, NC Senator

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PROP WASH

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE/REPAIR

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of the more important services an airport can offer its pilots and based aircraft owners is to have a qualified mechanic available on site. For the past few months Gastonia has been without a mechanic. Try as we may, we have been unsuccessful in finding someone to come here and open a shop. We've been advertising in the Southern Aviator regularly and telling other airport operators about our need.

Hopefully, we are not premature, but we think we have a good prospect to take over our much needed repair shop. We have an applicant who visited us a few weeks ago and has expressed an interest in moving here. He's an A/P with an IA (inspection authorization) and loads of experience on small GA aircraft, corporate aircraft such as Citations, King Airls and the many smaller corporate twins that frequent our runway. He is also experienced on USAF aircraft and is in the Airforce Reserve assigned to C-17's at Charleston AFB.

In addition, he can refurbish and rebuild aircraft of all types, do annuals, prepurchase inspections, engine overhaul and/or replacement, 50 & 100 hr. inspections, etc.

Prior to coming to Gastonia, he was the owner and operator of East Texas Aviation Services in Livingston, Texas. As you might have guessed, he goes by the name of Tex.

If you have need for any of these services on your aircraft, until he has set up shop full time, let us know so we can have him contact you. He will be available most weekends until about November 1. Then he will be here full time. We wish him the best of luck in this new venture.



FACILITIES DATA

Gastonia Municipal (AKH)
Office Hours 0730 to 0730 (6:30PM Winter)
RW's 03/21 3500 ft. asphalt
P.O.Box 1748, Gastonia, N.C. 28053
Phones: 704 864-4363 FAX 704 866-6992
e-mail Gastoniaairport@juno.com
Lat. 35-11-54 Long. 81-08-48
Unicom: 123.0 RTR: 127.2 ASOS:135.725
ASOS ph 704 868-9034
PAPI's and ODALS 3 to 7 clicks on 123.0
Elevation: 803 MSL Left pattern-1600ft

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

MORE ABOUT THE FUTURE

In the May '97 Prop Wash issue, we wrote about what 20 & 30 years in the future might be like around Gastonia, what would airtravel be like and what role small GA airports like ours would play. We predicted the vast growth of the population and the crowded roads, would make the small, close in airports essential to relieve the expanding congestion of cities and towns of the future. Will Gastonia and Gaston County be able to count on having its Municipal Airport available in 2020 and beyond to help serve the vital aviation needs of that time? Will the city officials of that generation be able to look back and thank their predecessors for maintaining an airport that has become essential to the travel needs of their community and to generations of the future?

So, where do we stand today with the Gastonia Municipal Airport? Will it continue to serve the needs of locally based pilots and the many pilots who visit Gastonia daily from throughout the country? Many residents and pilots have asked this question, having heard and read that the County is considering a regional airport somewhere

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else in the county. At least one group has organized and holds frequent meetings to condemn plans that they think will be for an airport being built in their backyard. The fact is that no such site has been selected and won't be until a county decision has been reached to proceed and an engineering consultant has been hired and a thorough site selection procedure has been conducted. This and availability of funding for the project may be years away.

County officials have been discussing the development of a regional airpark to stimulate much needed economic development in the area. Gaston County lags the other counties surrounding Charlotte in airport development. Concord Regional Airport was the beneficiary of the airport funding that was originally intended for Gastonia's Pasour Mountain site. Monroe has continued to expand its airport as has Rock Hill airport to the south. However, if Gaston County continues its effort to develop a regional airpark somewhere along its western border and near the planned outer beltway around Charlotte, it will eventually catch up and earn its share of the future industrial development moving into the area. With the FAA and the state paying for about 95% of the cost of a new airport, few community projects offer so much benefit at so little cost to the taxpayers.

As for Gastonia, city officials are doing what is needed to maintain the existing Municipal Airport so it will continue to serve the needs of local business's and corporate and general aviation in the community for many years to come. It is still one of the most active small airports in the state and as such, the N.C. Division of Aviation is contributing heavily to maintain the physical condition of the airport. In short, the Gastonia Municipal Airport could be operational for many years to come.

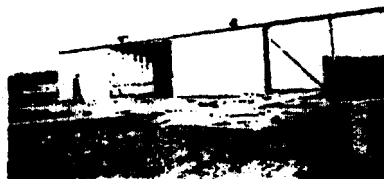
NEW HANGAR BEING BUILT

By the time this goes to press, a new \$150,000 hangar should be nearly completed on the site of the old PAC hangar. The land was leased to Robert Ingraham Homes, Inc., a well known Charlotte and Gastonia builder. The hangar will have room for two turbo prop aircraft and an office for their flight department. We welcome Mr. Ingraham and wish him the best in this new venture.

SOME AIRPORT HISTORY

During WWII, the Gastonia Airport was started by the Gastonia Township Commission and five progressive commissioners. A plan was completed on Oct. 10, 1944 and grading was started on two 3000 ft. runways. One was paved. Shortly thereafter, the first building on the airport was constructed to accommodate

several planes that were to be used for airtaxi charters serving other N.C. cities. The original wood framed hangar was 46ft wide by 20ft deep. (I wonder what type of plane was to be stored in this size hangar) It was soon expanded to 40 ft deep. Clyde Barker of Gastonia was the builder and was paid \$1000 for the work. He furnished this photo of that first hangar.



However, it wasn't long before one of the tornado's we see occasionally, came thru the area and relocated the hangar in pieces some 1000 ft away. It was never rebuilt.

The only other photo we have of the airport back in those days is an aerial view that we have in the airport office. It shows the airport out in the country then and not much else around. If anyone has earlier photos of the airport, we would welcome them along with a narration of what happened at that time.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR ALL PILOTS

1. Another windsock will soon be installed at the north end of the runway, just outward from the installed PAPI lights. Called the Supplemental Wind Cone by the FAA, it must be placed no closer than 250 ft. from the runway centerline and about 1000 ft from the threshold. We removed over 2000 trees from around our main windsock, but that still wasn't enough to enable a pilot to see the sock from the head of RW 21. Larry Wood suggested another sock would be better and save a lot of money over the years. He was right.
2. Our current blimp schedule has just the Metlife blimp here on Oct 29 thru Nov. 2. We seem to be the choice of most blimp operators who visit Charlotte, so we may have other blimps here this fall.
3. To those who own your own hangar, you can appeal your tax bill if you think its too high. Everyone I've talked to says theirs is. There are three levels of appeals that you can use. Include a copy of your lease with your appeal to show that the city owns the land. Even though the cutoff date was July 31, they are still accepting appeals.
4. Anyone interested in attending a GAAC (Airport Advisory Committee) meeting? You are always invited to sit in. A notice will be placed on the bulletin board in the lounge prior to each meeting at the Gastonia City Hall. The next one is scheduled for Oct. 4 at 4:00 PM.

5. The GAAC is now up to full strength with David Taylor being sworn in at the last meeting. The City Council has approved the following requirements for committee membership.

Two Gastonia Pilots/lessees
One Airport Neighbor
One local business person
One member at large

6. Our ASOS, which still has not been officially commissioned, has just started to enfringe (step on) our unicorn frequency at different times. We've reported the problem and hopefully it will be corrected soon. It usually happens when its foggy and overcast.

7. Although this isn't covered in the airport rules and regulations, it is covered in our many manuals on aircraft refueling. No refueling will be done to an aircraft inside a hangar. No refueling will be done during an electrical storm. And of course, no smoking will be allowed within 50 ft. of any refueling operation. Finally, no refueling will be done to any aircraft if it is running. I'm sure we all agree that safety must be our primary concern.

EXPO '97

The airport will present an exhibit as part of the City Expo '97 at the Eastridge Mall Oct. 24 and 25 as part of a city wide presentation to the citizens of Gastonia. Each city department will display examples of their particular service to the community. All pilots and would-be pilots are invited to attend.

The theme of the airport exhibit this year will be "Stop Dreaming. Start Flying" which is also the theme of GA Team 2000, an ambitious industry program to increase the number of student pilots in the U.S. In addition to extensive TV and magazine ads in the coming months, GA Team 2000 will be offering prospective students an introductory plane ride for \$35.00. Local flight instructors will be available to schedule and provide these flights which are intended to encourage people to learn to fly.

The main attraction of the airport booth at the Mall will be a computerized flight simulator that will allow visitors to fly different aircraft into major airports around the country. Complete with instrument panel, control stick, and sound of flight, would-be pilots can get a realistic ride in some of our most sophisticated and advanced aircraft. It should be fun and perhaps it will stimulate some interest in more of our residents wanting to become pilots. It doesn't take a space scientist to predict that we're going to need a lot of new pilots in the future.